

Split Mountain Receives Juvenile Justice Grant for 2013

The Split Mountain Youth Center (SMYC) in Vernal was awarded a 3 year Juvenile Justice Grant (JAG) through the Utah Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice (CCJJ) which will allow us to hire staff to implement this new program. The Grant will commence this fall of 2013. Anticipating the program will meet its outcome goals for the first year, it will then be awarded with extending the grant for an additional 2 years. The objective of this award is to provide early intervention services with (emphasis on female adolescence issues) to the Native American community in Duchesne and Uintah Counties and impede the escalation of youth into the juvenile justice system. These services will be comprised of Youth Services, Juvenile Receiving Center, Outreach services to the youth at home utilizing the Strengthening Families curriculum and collaborate directly with the schools on and off the reservation to improve educational outcomes with the Native American community. The Split Mountain Youth Center will augment services where possible in support of the grant.

The population for Uintah and Duchesne counties has dramatically increased (29 percent) in the past ten years. The 8th District Juvenile Court was recently assigned an additional Juvenile Court judge because of the increase growth in this area. The challenges in addressing poverty, child abuse and neglect, drug and alcohol abuse, teenage pregnancy, truancy, and poor achievement rates in education are great. It is our objective to work in a strategic, collaborative effort with all community partners to impact the current trends in the Native American community and build on the strengths of this valuable community partner.

The Split Mountain Youth Center program has made great strides in improving the relationships with the Native American community. They have laid a solid foundation leading up to the opportunities provided with this grant. The SMYC staff have facilitated Native American cultural training for the SMYC staff, conduct on-going meetings at Fort Duchesne and at the SMYC with exchanging information in addressing the needs and concerns collaboratively. The juvenile court personnel and Judge Steele have also participated in the collaborate efforts facilitated through SMYC. We are confident that all the energy and dedication in addressing needs of this community will transcend into positive results. We must be committed to the effort, sensitive to the client, and make every effort to see the system through their eyes.